

Uniform DN Practice Workgroup

Mini-Grant Goals

- (1) Improve the quality of professional practice in DN work on a statewide basis.**
- (2) Increase collaboration among stakeholders in DN cases.**
- (3) Conserve limited judicial resources.**
- (4) Reduce state expenditures associated with litigating DN matters.**

Mini-Grant Objectives

- (1) Build a collaborative team of participants representing major stakeholders in the DN system.**
- (2) Assemble the team at a workshop for the purpose of developing a uniform DN practice manual, to include forms, pleadings, and procedural guidelines.**
- (3) Distribute the Uniform DN Practice Manual to stakeholders statewide.**
- (4) Encourage and promote use of a uniform DN practice manual.**

The Work Group

- ▶ Hon. David Rice
- ▶ Hon. Nels Swandal
- ▶ Nick Aemisegger
- ▶ Sarah Corbally
- ▶ Lucy Darty
- ▶ Kimberly Deschene
- ▶ Kevin T. Frank
- ▶ Kathleen Jenks

- ▶ Lawrence A. LaFountain
- ▶ Scott Pederson
- ▶ Eric Olson
- ▶ Kalah Paisley
- ▶ Ann Schilling
- ▶ Brian Smith
- ▶ Ryan Tofflemire
- ▶ Kellie Voyich

National Resource Consultants

- ▶ Hon. Joanne M. Brown, J.D., MSW
 - Juvenile and Family Court Judge (ret.)
(Alameda County, CA)

- ▶ Stephanie Boyd Seraphin, ACSW
 - National Resource Center for Permanency and Family Connections
(Hunter College, N.Y.)

- ▶ Amanda George Donnelly, Attorney
 - National Association of Counsel for Children
(Denver, CO)

- ▶ Elizabeth Thornton, Attorney
 - A.B.A. Center for Children and the Law
(Washington, D.C.)

DN Workshop Goals (I)

- ▶ To work together to identify things that are not working
- ▶ To move toward a more consistent practice
- ▶ To help recognize and meet case specific timelines
- ▶ To develop harmonious working relationships
- ▶ To refine the discovery process
- ▶ To put our energy into doing everything we possibly can to do a better job for Montana kids and families
- ▶ To improve public education
- ▶ To produce a “fool-proof guide” for new practitioners
- ▶ To seek statutory revision in the way kids are represented
- ▶ To clarify the roles of the parties
- ▶ To incorporate national best practices
- ▶ To understand that communication is the key to success
- ▶ To implement mediation techniques

DN Workshop Goals (II)

- ▶ To accomplish more uniformity in pleadings/practice
- ▶ To get people into courtrooms across the state to implement the best ideas and minimize the fights
- ▶ To help the state see ICWA as a better way for non-natives to understand how Indian families work, not just a statutory or procedural step
- ▶ To increase trust among the players in the process
- ▶ To learn about the issues affecting others in the state
- ▶ Create a better definition or term for the theoretical idea of “best interest”
- ▶ To refocus on fixing families